



**Pacific Electric ROW/West Santa Ana Branch Corridor
Alternatives Analysis
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #6**

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Bellflower City Hall
Green Room
16600 Civic Center Drive
Bellflower, CA 90706

Meeting Notes

Invitees	Organization
Philip Law	SCAG
Matt Gleason	SCAG
Stephen Fox	SCAG
Wendy Garcia	OCTA
Marissa Espino	OCTA
Alan Patashnick	Metro
Renee Berlin	Metro
Mary Nguyen	FTA
Michael Kodama	OLDA
John Walker	Los Angeles County DPW
Howard Huie	CPUC
Lupe Valdez	Union Pacific
David Sanchez	City of Anaheim
Deborah Chankin	City of Bellflower
Hal Arbogast	City of Cerritos
Kamran Dadbeh	City of Cypress
Keith Jones	City of Garden Grove
Jimmy Ewenike	City of Los Angeles, LADOT
G. Daniel Ojeda	City of Lynwood
Bill Pagett	City of Lakewood/City of Maywood
Christopher Cash	City of Paramount
Dave Bondolillo	City of Santa Ana
Kevin Wilson	City of Vernon
Katherine Padilla	Katherine Padilla & Associates
Nancy Michali	AECOM
Yara Jasso	AECOM
Joel Ulloa	AECOM

1. Welcome

- P. Law initiated the meeting with introductions and briefly explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft Initial Screening Report that was sent a few weeks prior to the meeting and receive comments from the TAC.

2. Recap of Feb. 25 Steering Committee Working Session

- P. Law provided a recap of the Steering Committee working session that was held in February, and noted their discussion regarding inclusion of the Low Speed Maglev as part of the Final Set of Alternatives. P. Law commented that SCAG and the Project Team are working with OLDA staff to collect more information on the Nagoya Low Speed Maglev System. The Project Team will return in April to the Steering Committee with a proposed scope and cost for inclusion of the Low Speed Maglev Alternative.
 - P. Law discussed OLDA's letter submitted to the Steering Committee on February 10th, which raised the issue of including a Low Speed Maglev Alternative, along with the draft response letter from SCAG to Steering Committee Co-Chair Diane Dubois. In the letter, SCAG requested that the Steering Committee give direction on whether they would like to include a Low Speed Maglev in the Final Set of Alternatives. The letter also provided responses to technical and process issues raised in the OLDA letter. SCAG will be asking the Steering Committee to approve the responses and direct staff to forward the letter to the OLDA Board.
 - M. Kodama (OLDA): As you all know, there are major issues going on in Japan that will definitely delay our process of collecting information about the Japanese Low Speed Maglev System. All of their efforts and resources are focused on recovering from their recent earthquake. Discussions on Urban Maglev may not be a top priority for them at the moment.
 - R. Berlin (Metro): Is there a way around speaking directly with the Japanese?
 - N. Michali: We have found significant information on-line regarding the Linimo Line.
 - R. Berlin: A white paper with the information you have now and how it fits into the frame work may be helpful in informing the Steering Committee.
 - M. Kodama: What we can do is share what OLDA has collected now instead of waiting for additional information. We have also done some research with the FTA, who was very helpful.
 - B. Pagett (Lakewood/Maywood): Will the Low Speed Maglev replace the old maglev alternative?
 - P. Law: It is being considered as a new alternative to be added to the existing list of alternatives.
 - W. Garcia (OCTA): I would like to make comments about the letter: Points Number 3 and 4 note that items would be further investigated during the DEIR/DEIS phase. Currently, OCTA does not have available funds and we cannot directly head into the next phase as quickly as the letter expresses. Can you please soften the language to regarding our direction following the AA study?
 - P. Law: Yes, we will clarify OCTA's position and make a more general statement reflecting that. If any of you have any further comments, please submit them to me by the end of this week.
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3. Initial Screening Report

- N. Michali presented the findings developed during the Initial Screening efforts and the information documented as part of the Initial Screening report. She noted that much of the information is work that has been presented in the past; however, the report also includes some new information regarding the Initial Set of Alternatives.
 - K. Wilson (Vernon): On the West Bank alignment of the Rail Alternative, why would the alignment not go all the way into Union Station?
 - N. Michali: Union Station is now at-capacity, and the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) is also planning on going into Union Station, pushing it beyond-capacity. If the CHSRA adds a second layer over the existing tracks, this project may be able to “piggy-back” off their efforts to connect with Union Station.
 - R. Berlin: You are considering using the Metrolink tracks on the East Bank alignment. Those are at-capacity.
 - N. Michali: It is our understanding, based on conversations with Metrolink that the east bank tracks are at 85 percent. There is a significant challenge with using the Metrolink tracks, but they did not entirely turn us away. Metrolink staff expressed concern that Union Pacific has intermodal facilities that use those tracks. We would also have to build a new bridge over the Los Angeles River to access Union Station. Therefore, there are significant challenges for getting into downtown Los Angeles, but accomplishing that is really the golden point for this project from a destination and ridership perspective.
 - M. Kodama: Is it possible that we may have to share the track if the West Bank Alternative is pursued?
 - N. Michali: At this point, the West Bank Alignment appears to be more feasible. The Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have opened their doors and are willing to sell their ROW, but it depends on the cities of South Gate and Huntington Park being supportive of using some of their active/inactive ROW's. Based on an initial meeting, Huntington Park was very welcoming to us. The next biggest challenge is in the City of Los Angeles, where we propose to travel north along Alameda Street. This is a heavily-traveled, truck route into eastern Downtown, and the LADOT staff has requested that the alignment go underground. There are significant challenges in using either side of the river.
 - J. Ewenike (LADOT): After meeting with my supervisors (Susan Bock and Kang Hu), they have expressed the view that any project that goes along Alameda Street would be best underground. Their concern is that the West Bank alignment alternative may contribute to congestion when added to the future Exposition LRT Line on 7th Street and Washington Boulevard. Also, running along Alameda Street would mean providing service within proximity of the existing Metro Blue Line, which will result in little utility for the PEROW/WSAB project. LADOT supports the East Bank alignment as a better option.
 - N. Michali: We are not planning on using Washington Boulevard as we recognize its constraints. We have met with Metro Operations and discussed potentially sharing the Blue Line north of Slauson Avenue. The population density on the west side is much higher than the east side.
 - K. Wilson: It appears that the only proposal the City of Los Angeles is willing to accept is an underground alternative.
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- J. Ewenike: No. If the alignment is along Alameda Street, then an underground alignment is the only option we would accept. LADOT has no preference for or concern about the vertical configuration outside of the Alameda Street Corridor.
 - N. Michali: The mayor and council members will also provide direction as to what is most beneficial for their communities. We have received a different direction from the city council representatives in this portion of Downtown Los Angeles. That will definitely be an issue that will need to be sorted out.
 - K. Wilson: Can the Metro Gold Line be used as another potential connector into Union Station somewhere?
 - N. Michali: Yes, connecting to the Metro Gold Line has possibility and has been brought up by Metro and city council offices.
 - M. Gleason (SCAG): (to LADOT) Jimmy, are LADOT's concerns mostly focused on the segment north or south of the Redondo Junction?
 - J. Ewenike: At this point, we did not discuss specific sections of Alameda Street. LADOT is mainly supporting the East Bank alignment. The department is mainly concerned with traffic and mobility potentially affected by this project. LADOT also wants to make sure it brings up these challenges early on, before conceptual alignments are decided upon.
 - R. Berlin: You may want to speak to rail representatives at Metro with regards to the splitting of the Gold Line by the Regional Connector. The final environmental document is scheduled for review by the FTA in approximately 6 weeks.
 - N. Michali: We will do that thank you.
 - K. Wilson: Regarding Alameda Street in the Vernon area, I am not sure how feasible it would be to add another at-grade or above-grade structure to the trench over the Alameda Corridor. It does not seem feasible given the amount of traffic by trucks along that street.
 - N. Michali: The West Bank alignment will include other street options, not just Alameda. Susan Bok of LADOT offered Central Avenue as another option. If I am hearing that you would like to pull the West Bank alignment off the table, I would argue that we do not have enough information at this point to do that.
 - K. Wilson: No. Alameda Street just does not seem very feasible, but if there are other viable alternatives, they should definitely be studied further.
 - B. Pagett: Also, the 710 freeway studies show that one of the alternatives for the Freight Corridor for trucks is to be placed over the Alameda Corridor as a second level. You might want to talk to Jerry Wood about that. It is not in the EIR, but they are looking at it as an alternative for the freight corridor.
 - P. Law: We have spoken to J. Wood in the past and he has never brought this up as an issue, but we will speak to him again.
 - B. Pagett: Is there any possibility that Los Angeles County would move forward with a different preferred alternative than Orange County? From the last meeting, I thought I saw that there was not much demand from Orange County residents to go north.
 - W. Garcia (OCTA): No, we did not make that comment.
 - N. Michali: From the preliminary Travel Demand Model perspective, there is demand between Los Angeles County and central and western Orange County.
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- M. Nguyen (FTA): I think there was a question when reviewing the Purpose and Need regarding the transportation pattern between counties. The Purpose and Need will look at both regional and local trips, with the purpose of the Corridor being to look at both types of trips.
 - J. Ewenike: How will the BRT option accommodate the Metro Rapid service that runs on Soto Street if selected as the alignment? Will the project increase the number of buses to reflect the increase in ridership? Looking at it from a traffic perspective, would there be a need for more buses to run along Soto Street?
 - N. Michali: The BRT alternative would be in street-running operations on Soto Street, and we will be looking at increasing bus activity. We are proposing an alternative where the Metro Rapid buses would serve shorter-spaced stations, while the BRT buses would serve wider-spaced stations.
 - R. Berlin: Regarding slide 9, are you planning on having Community Outreach once the Steering Community agrees on the Final Set of Alternatives?
 - N. Michali: We are planning another series of community meetings in the Fall to share the information from the Steering Committee.
 - M. Kodama: Regarding slide #11, if the BRT or Street Car alternatives potentially had more stations, would they run at slower speeds than identified here? (Yes)
 - J. Ewenike: Are these speeds and other information, “opening-day” projections?
 - N. Michali: These numbers represent the experience of currently operating systems.
 - D. Chankin: Regarding slide 10, how did you determine if the modes had an improved travel speed?
 - N. Michali: Considering public transit, the community expressed that they would like to ride transit, and frequently referenced the Metro Blue Line. However, the community pointed out its reduced speed, especially going into Downtown Los Angeles, made it unattractive to use when compared to driving. I made this comparison based on the average speed of the Metro Blue Line, which is approximately 25 mph. LRT and HSS were the only alternatives that were an improvement over that speed. The improvement of time travel will also be dependent on the vertical configurations of the alternatives.
 - M. Nguyen: We are looking at travel time savings over the Blue Line. Since we are being mode-neutral, are we looking at travel time savings over road systems or a highway?
 - N. Michali: We did not compare it to highways, because when we looked at travel times in the AM and PM peak periods the speeds varied significantly, as well as between one highway to another. We did not know what highway to compare it with in order to keep a consistent comparison. Across the board, when speaking to residents, they all referenced the Metro Blue Line when considering public transit. However, many were not satisfied with how slow it traveled. From the community perspective, they wanted something that was faster than the Blue Line.
 - M. Nguyen: In the report, we need to see that. If this were to move forward to the EIR/EIS, a comparison to roadways would need to be documented and made certain that all other possibilities were screened out for a reason. It should be compared to arterial and highway speeds, not as an alternative, but as a comparison. If there is a clear community support for more transit that should definitely be presented, as well.
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- N. Michali: When we went out to the community during public scoping, the issue of using the ROW for a highway as opposed to public transit was never raised.
 - R. Berlin: I just want to mention that you did not do a formal scoping process, so you cannot say that you have done a public scoping. You conducted community meetings but no scoping. I just wanted to make that clear.
 - M. Kodama: Regarding slide 13, for the HSS, there seem to be portions of that segment that almost do not have any ridership. Is there any way you can factor that out so that you are looking more at an urban system?
 - N. Michali: That is a good point, and I will confirm that the ridership reflected a segment similar to that of Santa Ana to Los Angeles.
 - R. Berlin: If the DMU Alternative were to move forward, would Metrolink be the proper operator?
 - N. Michali: We proposed this to Metrolink, and they were not interested. If the project were willing to use their same vehicles, they would be.
 - J. Ewenike: Regarding slide 18, do these costs reflect both alignments?
 - N. Michali: At this level of conceptual screening, we used the East Bank alignment because all of the alternatives are similar in that they all have East Bank alignments.
 - K. Wilson: On slide 20, can you explain the horn and signal noises? It seems like you did not include that in here.
 - N. Michali: This chart only presents the operational noise. A future project may be required to have warning horns as the system travels through an intersection and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is responsible for setting standards and reviewing the proposed improvements. The latest system that went through this was the Metro Gold Line in Pasadena and there is a specific ordinance on the CPUC website. They specified that the horns and bells can only be 67-76 dBA, and that the bells also only ring as the gates go down and shut off when the gates are down.
 - K. Wilson: The Blue Line does not operate under that requirement right? (No.) Is Metro considering adopting that type of system for the Blue Line?
 - R. Berlin: No, I do not think Metro is doing anything in regards to that.
 - K. Wilson: Will that type of system be considered for this system?
 - R. Berlin: That is something that is addressed during the development of mitigation measures. Not necessarily at this point.
 - R. Berlin: Regarding slide 24, it should be clear that any ROW needs that cities may incur are not part of the project cost. There is no reason to include those property acquisitions as part of the project.
 - N. Michali: Yes, they are not part of the project, but the acquisitions do need to be identified to the community. However, we will be more specific about explaining acquisitions tied directly to the project. All the acquisitions shown on these slides are only those related to the project.
 - R. Berlin: Regarding slide 28, there is evidence of support for local development and land use plans with a BRT system. We have some information on the Metro Orange Line, and have been receiving phone calls from potential developers to include more stations on that Line.
 - N. Michali: I would appreciate seeing that information. I was only able to find documented projects for places outside of the United States.
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- W. Garcia: I had a couple of comments: What is important for OCTA is to consider the connectivity with the Santa Ana-Garden Grove Fixed Guideway Project, which is definitely a priority in Orange County. The guideway system and the potential ramp connectors to the Garden Grove Freeway may consume a large portion of the available ROW. You may consider looking into options for connecting at Westminster or Harbor Boulevards. Also, we have two cities that oppose transit on the ROW and we need to think of ways of potentially working around that. Finally, something that may come up in the future as well as when a new OCTA Co-Chair from OCTA is appointed, is that OCTA has an adopted Board policy in place stating that emerging technologies should be monitored but not implemented without evidence of long-term successful sustainability.
- D. Chankin: When would you like comments by?
- P. Law: We would like comments by this week, or at the latest by Monday.

4. Next Meeting

Purpose: Conclude Discussion on Recommendations for Final Set of Alternatives

- Tuesday, April 19, 2011, 1:30 PM
- Location: Buena Park

5. Upcoming Schedule of Study Efforts

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| ▪ Technical Advisory Committee Meeting | April 19 |
| ▪ Steering Committee Meeting | April 27 |
| ▪ Concurrence on Final Set of Alternatives | April 27 |
| ▪ Initiate Final Screening Efforts | May 2 |